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## Lincoln-Douglas Debate—Charleston.

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In the memorable canvass in '58, when Lincoln and Douglas had their celebrated joint debate, many strange things happened. History does not record a case before this where statesmen championing two opposite issues of the day took their case as an appeal to the people to be decided by them, until these two intellectual giants met on the friendly rostrum to discuss the affairs of state.

To decide on the standard of oratory is a most difficult matter, and with Lincoln and Douglas, who were so different in every particular, it certainly was only by their comparative power to move or sway an audience as to which was the greater orator.

Douglas was short in stature, florid in appearance, and every gesture he made showed the training of a school that taught men how to appeal to an audience. He was highly educated, so, having an unlimited vocabulary his speeches were free from the repetition that too often occurs with ordinary speakers.

Douglas had been before the people as a stump speaker often, and at the time of the joint debate he was called the "Little Giant," and was easily the foremost man of his party in the west. Lincoln was not an unknown man, as too many appear to think, for he had served his State in the Legislature and had been in Congress. His dress and manner were not such as to command that admiration that Douglas had commanded, but he appeared to be the antipodes of Douglas.

Lincoln's manner as he appeared to the ordinary person commanded a feeling of sympathy at first, then the stronger emotions would come upon the listener, and soon the general appearance of the speaker became forgotten because of the

earnestness with which he presented his side of the case. When Lincoln spoke of the slave question to the average audience, he did not dwell on the subject to the extent it is generally supposed he did, nor did he recite harrowing details of the traffic in slaves so as to gain prestige by prejudice, but he, in his own unassuming way, would raise his left arm, holding it so that it would be bent at the elbow, the right arm and hand extended toward the audience, with the body leaning in the same direction, and would say in no unusual tones, "I am opposed to any human person being held in bondage, for I think that slavery is wrong." In following Douglas on the joint platform, Lincoln seldom referred to the former's flights of oratory except to pass the usual compliments that courtesy demands in such cases. This strange combination, these two men who were then debating the questions that would in a short time have to be decided by the army as the court of highest appeal, little knew that their words of debate would live in history and become a basis for a settlement of the two factions of this country. As might be inferred, Douglas held the crowd with magic delivery of eloquent appeal until they became spellbound, and for one to follow him, was to overcome the barrier of impression that had been built so well by Douglas, that the task appeared herculean and would not have been attempted by an ordinary person, and in Lincoln's efforts to overcome these fixed opinions he showed the tact that made him so famous in after life.

At the time this debate was going on, the newspapers were not read as much as now, so the people depended largely on the speakers for information, and this was one of the reasons that so many came to hear the debate, but as the party moved from town to town, the crowds kept increasing until the audiences were immense. At one of the meetings Douglas made the statement in his usual eloquent manner that when Lincoln was in Congress he voted against a bill for supplies for our army in Mexico. To this assertion Lincoln made no reply, and at the next town Douglas repeated the assertion with more emphasis, and when Charleston was reached, as was the practice, prominent men of both parties were seated on the plat-

form, and among them was Hon. O. B. Ficklen. Douglas again made the statement that Lincoln had refused to vote for supplies to our army in Mexico, and when Lincoln's time came to speak, he said, "Mr. Douglas has made the statement that when I was in Congress I voted against furnishing supplies for our army in Mexico, and as Mr. Ficklen, who most of you know was in Congress at the time, is in the audience, I will ask him to step forward and state the facts in the case."

O. B. Ficklen was a Democrat of the pronounced type, but in all his long life his integrity was never questioned, and now at a critical time in his party affairs he was put to the test, but he never faltered, and in his slow way arose from his seat, taking a position near the front of the stage and said in tones that were most positive, these words: "Mr. Douglas is mistaken."